

REMARKS

Claim 31 has been amended and new claims 41-53 have been added to more clearly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicants regard as the present invention. Supports for the amendment of claim 31 can be found in claims 34, 37 and page 7, line 32–page 8, line 1. Supports for claims 41-53 can be found on page 28, line 1–page 33, line 11; page 50, lines 15-23 and page 52, lines 15-18. Claims 21-30, 34-35, 37-40 have been canceled. These amendments do not contain new matter. Entry is believed to be proper and respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTION

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 21-33 and 35-40 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Roe (US 5,607,760) in view of Kasahara et al. (JP 04-182,423). The Examiner also states that claim 34 would be allowable if rewritten in an independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have canceled Claims 21-30, 34-35, 37-40. Applicants have amended claim 31 to include specific protease inhibitors that are not taught or suggested by Roe/Kasahara. Applicants have also added dependent claims 41-53 that further define the invention.

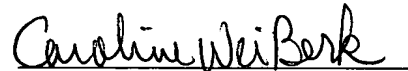
As such, Applicants believe all the claims are allowable over Roe/Kasahara. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection, and the issuance of a notice of allowance.

CONCLUSION

The above represents a complete response to the Final Office Action dated December 19, 2001. Reconsideration, withdrawal of rejection and allowance of claims 31, 41-53 are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,
For: Rourke et al.



Caroline Wei-Berk
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 45,203
(513) 626-1139

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIn The Claims

Please cancel claims 21-30, 34-35, 37-40.

Please amend the following claims:

31. (Amended) An absorbent article at least a portion of which comprises a protease inhibitor wherein the protease inhibitor has an IC_{50} of about 500 μ M or less, as measured by a General Fecal Protease Method; wherein the protease inhibitor is 4-(2-aminoethyl)-benzenesulfonylfluoride hydrochloride, hexamidine and its salts, or pentamidine and its salts.